

Certificate in Business Information Systems

Introduction to the World of Computers

Concept:

The unit has been designed to introduce complete beginners to the world of computing. Students will learn through an effective combination of traditional study and practical hands-on use of computers.

Aims:

1. To introduce candidates to the basic workings of the personal computer and its commonly used peripherals
2. To provide an overview of the range and scope of IT in business and administration
3. To develop basic IT skills using Windows, email and the Internet
4. To lay the foundations for further study in IT or IT related subjects especially the ABE Diploma in Business Information Systems

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the parts of a Pentium type PC and usual peripherals
2. Explain in layman's terms the specification of such a PC as given in a typical advertisement in a non-technical publication (e.g. a British daily newspaper)
3. Describe a range of different types of computers and their applications in business
4. Use Windows to set up a personalised working environment and to manage and organise backing storage
5. Demonstrate an awareness of the principal structures underlying the Internet, email and the World Wide Web
6. Use a browser and search engine software to access, download and edit useful information
7. Compose, send and receive emails and manage a personal mailbox
8. Draw simple diagrams to illustrate common network topologies
9. Appreciate the need for security with respect to both hardware and software

Course unit content

1.0 Personal computer basics

- 1.1 CPUs: types, basic functions and measures of performance
(NB Processor architecture at the micro-level is not required)
- 1.2 Memory: volatile and non-volatile, backing storage, media and its appropriate uses and applications
- 1.3 PC peripherals: common input/output devices, overview of relevant interfaces and ports
- 1.4 Basic practical skills using keyboard and mouse

2.0 Introduction to software

- 2.1 Operating system software: DOS, Windows and utilities
- 2.2 Applications software: range of applications and their compatibility
- 2.3 Development software: Computer languages and appropriate tasks

3.0 Practical introduction to Windows

- 3.1 Navigating the Desktop: icons, objects, dialog boxes, pull-down and pop-up menus
- 3.2 Customising the desktop: background colours and tiles, arranging and sizing icons, creating shortcuts and maximising and minimising windows applications
- 3.3 File and folder management: locating and finding files; moving, copying, renaming and deleting files; creating folders, making and retrieving backups
- 3.4 Installing and de-installing a program

4.0 Introduction to the Internet

- 4.1 Logging onto an Internet Service Provider (ISP) or online service provider; downloading emails, saving and sending emails
- 4.2 Managing your mailbox: dealing with file attachments, tidying your mailbox and maintaining an address book
- 4.3 Email security: avoiding viruses, email and internet etiquette and good practice
- 4.4 Using a browser and search engine effectively and downloading pages
- 4.5 Refining searches: assessing the quality of web pages, plagiarism

5.0 The wider world of IT

- 5.1 Local area networks: layouts, servers and basic networking hardware
- 5.2 Large scale computers: multi-user systems, wide area networks and their applications to business and administration
- 5.3 More about security: physical security, software and data security, passwords and measures to protect PCs

ASSESSMENT

There are two elements to the assessment:

1. Continuous assessment of practical work by tutor
2. Written examination of both theory and practice

1. The practical assessment

Candidates will undertake a series of practical assignments set by ABE examiners and carried out at approved study centres. Candidates must demonstrate that they can satisfactorily carry out key tasks unaided using the prescribed software packages. Study centres will provide ABE with a report on the candidate's achievement in the practical assessment.

2. The written paper

The written paper will test theoretical and descriptive work as well as the practical skills learned during the course. Pass mark 40%. Time allowed 3 hours.

Candidates who have not achieved a satisfactory standard in the practical assessment may be advised by their tutors not to attempt the written paper until a later examination session.

Important Information for both Candidates and Tutors

The unit contains a high proportion of practical work. Candidates will require access to a computer at college, and preferably at home or work as well.

The software required will be **Windows 95 or later**, and the **Microsoft Works Suite** which includes word processing, spreadsheet, database and other functions. Students will also require **online access to the Internet** with both email and web browser software. Practical work will be assessed by the candidate's tutor at an accredited institution.

It is advised that candidates study Unit 1 (Introduction to the World of Computers) first, but it would be quite possible to study Units 1 and 2 concurrently. Candidates should not study Unit 2 before Unit 1.

Essential Reading:

Key Skills in Information Technology Levels 2 & 3	Heathcote and Richards	Payne-Gallway
Microsoft Works Suite 2000 for Dummies	David Kay	IDG Books
Windows for Dummies 95 or 98	David Kay	IDG Books

Additional Reading for Windows Operating Systems:

Windows 95 in Easy Steps	Harshad Kotecha	Computer Step
Windows 98 in Easy Steps	Harshad Kotecha	Computer Step
Windows ME	Harshad Kotecha	Computer Step